



Preventing workplace injuries and illnesses

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Preventing workplace injuries and illnesses is one of L&I's five high-priority projects. Employers will be offered a package of prevention services geared specifically to their needs, based on their particular workplace and injury history. This new approach will allow L&I to provide upfront services with prevention in mind, rather than offering assistance after an employer has had difficulties.

Why is L&I focusing on prevention services?

All employers who pay premiums for workers' compensation insurance coverage are entitled to services that will help them manage their claims, as well as reduce the risks of their employees getting injured or ill on the job. We want to make sure that employers who need this information the most are aware of the information and able to easily obtain it.

What prevention services will L&I be offering to employers?

We will offer to conduct a comprehensive assessment of an employer's needs and offer an appropriate package of services, which could include any or all of the following:

- Review of workplace injuries, illnesses and workers' compensation claims with an assessment of losses and opportunities for loss control.
- An on-site review of workplace hazards, and recommendations for preventing injuries and illnesses by reducing employee exposure to hazards, whether required by rule or not.
- Review of applicable Washington Industrial Safety and Health Act (WISHA) standards and how to comply with them. This may include assistance with establishing an accident-prevention program, safety committee and other appropriate prevention programs, such as respirator use, hazard communication, hearing conservation, workplace violence or ergonomics.
- Review of claim management practices, which include return-to-work programs and other ways to control claims costs.
- Training and education programs for employees and supervisors.

Employers will be offered a package of prevention services geared specifically to their needs, based on their particular workplace and injury history.

When can an employer expect to receive L&I's prevention services?

They will be offered services based on either a routine schedule with set intervals or following a significant event. A significant event might be a serious workplace injury, a significant increase in an employer's "experience factor," a change in business ownership or the nature of the business, a WISHA citation for serious safety violations or when requested by the employer.

The package of prevention services, which will be specified in a written agreement, may vary: An employer would be offered particular services because there is a specific need. Such things as risk class or industry, size of the business, injury rate, experience factor and intervention history would help determine the needs of the employer.

Who will provide the prevention services to employers?

Each employer now has an account manager from our Employer Services section who is responsible for periodic account reviews and assistance referrals, ensuring that our interaction with employers is coordinated, and contacting the employer periodically to ensure that the employer's needs and expectations are being met.

When appropriate, the account manager will coordinate with an L&I prevention lead who will be well-versed in loss control and prevention. In order to provide a comprehensive approach to an employer's needs, the prevention lead will coordinate a team of WISHA consultants, risk management specialists, ergonomists, therapist consultants, and other resources depending on the specific situation. In special circumstances, such as when there have been specific employee complaints, it may be appropriate to refer the account to a WISHA compliance officer for a compliance inspection. This action would be coordinated with the prevention team.

Where can I learn more about L&I's prevention efforts?

Contact the prevention team leaders at the Department of Labor and Industries: Gail Hughes, 360-902-5439, hugh235@LNI.wa.gov; or Julie Madden, 206-835-1029, hecj235@LNI.wa.gov.

FIVE HIGH-PRIORITY PROJECTS

Preventing workplace injuries is one of L&I's five high-priority projects. The others are combating fraud and abuse, providing return-to-work assistance, improving claims management and increasing early employer contact. The goal is to provide high-quality customer service and eliminate unnecessary delays that affect workers' wages and employers' insurance costs.